



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## **Hearings scheduled on proposed fruit and vegetable fee increase**

**OLYMPIA** -- The Washington State Department of Agriculture's Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program is proposing fee increases for its hourly inspection rates, the issuance of phytosanitary certificates, and minimum certification charges.

Currently, the hourly inspection rate is at \$24.30 per hour with the overtime rate at \$33.03 per hour. The proposed hourly rate increase will raise the regular hourly rate to \$32 per hour and the overtime-hourly rate to \$42.

Phytosanitary certificates, which verify that exported fruit and vegetables meet the cleanliness requirements of the recipient countries, are \$6. The proposal will increase that fee to \$16. The minimum certification rates are currently \$9. The proposed rate will increase to \$16.

In addition to the above proposed rate increases, the Department is proposing to adopt the U.S. Department of Agriculture's hourly rates for audit time, administration time and applicable travel related to Good Handling Practices (GHP) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).

Jim Quigley, manager for the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program, said the current rates are not adequate to recover actual expenses.

Public hearings will be held at 1 p.m., May 11, at the WSU Tree Fruit Research & Extension Center, 1100 N. Western Avenue, Wenatchee. A second hearing will be held at 11 a.m., May 12, in the second floor conference room of the WSDA Fruit and Vegetable Inspection office, 21 N. First Avenue, Yakima.

For more information, contact Quigley by phone at (360) 902-1833, or by e-mail, [jquigley@agr.wa.gov](mailto:jquigley@agr.wa.gov). Information is also available from John Boyd, WSDA Field Operations Manager at (509) 225-2642.

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